



One minute guide

Working Together to Safeguard Children

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What is Working Together to Safeguard Children?

Working Together to Safeguard Children (usually referred to as just Working Together) is statutory guidance produced by the government which outlines how practitioners working with children, young people and families should work together in order to ensure that children and young people remain safe from harm. In this guidance, a child is defined as anybody under the age of eighteen; though the guidance does also apply to the safeguarding of unborn children.

Why do we have Working Together?

The Working Together statutory guidance was initially published in 1999, and set out how all agencies and professionals should work together to promote children's welfare and protect them from abuse and neglect. It was revised in 2006 following the public inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié.

Victoria was brought to the UK from the Ivory Coast in 1999 by her great aunt, and died in Haringey in February 2000 at the age of eight. She had sustained a number of serious injuries, and had been tied up for significant periods of time. Before her death, Victoria had been in contact with police, social work teams from four separate local authorities, the NHS and the NSPCC, but the investigation found that none of these agencies had fully investigated and, due to a lack of information sharing between them, none had a full picture of the abuse Victoria was suffering. The judge in the trial of Victoria's great aunt and her partner described the actions of these agencies as 'blinding incompetence.'

In response to Victoria's death, the government commissioned a public inquiry, led by [Lord Laming](#). This findings of the inquiry led to the government's Every Child Matters green paper, which proposed changes in legislation and policy to maximise opportunities for agencies to work together in order to effectively safeguard children. This green paper became the [Children Act \(2004\)](#).

The Children Act (2004) placed a duty on all agencies to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and in 2006 the revised version of Working Together was published. This statutory guidance outlines ways in which organisations and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Since 2006, there have been three further updates to the guidance. In 2010, the update expanded the focus on interagency working and took into account the recommendations of Lord Laming's 2008 progress report [The Protection of Children in England](#), which emphasised the importance of frontline practitioners getting to know children as individuals. The 2013 update was in response to the review of child protection in England, carried out by [Professor Eileen Munro](#).

The most recent update in 2015 focuses on the need for Early Help ([guide](#)) responses to identify and support the needs of children and young people as these needs emerge and are identified.

What changes were made in the 2015 Working Together update?

Ensuring that the needs of children, young people and families are identified as early as possible is key in ensuring that the right support and help is provided. This Early Help approach has been adopted by Leeds and is strengthened through Working Together 2015.

The guidance also reflects national safeguarding agendas including an emphasis on safeguarding Children Missing ([guide](#)), Young Carers, Disabled Children, Children in Secure Settings and those at risk of, or experiencing Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) ([guide](#)).

Working Together 2015 also updated what agencies and practitioners need to know and / or do in order to safeguard children and young people in relation to:

Allegations Management

Serious Childcare Incidents and Serious Case Reviews ([guide](#))

Assessments and services

Child Death Overview Process

Data provision

The Leeds Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) ([guide](#)) has outlined these changes, and how they fit into the Leeds Early Help Approach through [Working Together 2015 Practitioner Guidance](#) and [Working Together 2015 Agency Guidance](#).

Alongside the updated Working Together document, the Government also updated and published Keeping Children Safe in Education: [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#), produced a [children's version of Working Together 2015](#) and a [young person's version of Working Together 2015](#) and published [Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services](#).

Where can I find further information?

The updated version of the Working Together guidance can be viewed [online](#).

Training is available through LSCB on many aspects of safeguarding. To identify which training is right for you, please visit their [website](#).

You can read about the [Leeds Early Help approach](#)— 'Right conversations, right people, right time'.

You can also access the Leeds [Early Help Practitioner's Guidance](#).



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